

THE JCC IS FOR
EVERY
BODY

JCC of Greater Pittsburgh Annual Report 2025-2026

Message from Leadership

Dear Friends of the JCC,

Each year, just as we prepare to welcome Rosh Hashanah and the High Holidays, the JCC's fiscal year begins. This season of reflection, renewal and recommitment offers a fitting opportunity to learn from where we've been while looking ahead with purpose.

This past year reinforced something we have long believed: The JCC is far more than a place where programs happen. It is where people find belonging, relationships take root, resilience is strengthened, and community is activated.

At a time when polarization and distrust challenge civic life and loneliness and isolation affect every generation, the role of the JCC has never been more essential. It also gives special meaning to a simple idea guiding us this year: The JCC is for EVERYbody.

EVERYbody means welcoming people with different backgrounds, experiences, identities, beliefs and needs. It means providing high-quality opportunities for people throughout their lives and building community across differences. Most fundamentally, it means addressing

one of our deepest human needs: To belong. We want everyone who comes to the JCC to know there is a place for them here and that their presence makes our community stronger.

This isn't a new idea; it is part of our DNA. Beginning 131 years ago with roots in helping Jewish immigrants new to Pittsburgh find resources, opportunity and community, the JCC has continually evolved to meet changing needs. While our community may look different today, our fundamental purpose endures: to create opportunities for connection, dignity and belonging. Our Shared Framework is the set of guiding principles for how the JCC fulfills that purpose today, challenging us to preserve what has always been while we imagine a JCC of the 21st century.

This year, Merris's first as Board Chair, also reminded us that leadership is strongest when it is shared. Our partnership as volunteer and professional leaders has reinforced the importance of listening deeply, embracing complexity and leading with empathy.



Merris Groff
Chair of the Board



Jason Kunzman
President and CEO

Across the JCC, we saw that philosophy in action. We reached an all-time high in paid memberships and record personal training revenue. A new supportive employment program for adults with disabilities created pathways to meaningful work and greater independence. Unity in Community, our partnership with the YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh, brought people across differences together, while our new *Come Curious. Leave Wiser.* series creates space for nuanced dialogue beyond the headlines through multiple perspectives about Israel. *JCC Voices*, our new podcast series, expanded the stories and perspectives we share. These efforts joined continued innovation in programs for all ages, health and wellness, facilities and technology.

None of this happens alone. We are grateful for our extraordinary staff, Board, donors, volunteers, members and community partners. We continue

to learn from and be inspired by those who invest in our work. Your partnership enables us to sustain what exists as well as imagine and build what comes next.

As we look ahead, we do so with optimism and purpose. The JCC is for EVERYbody is both a promise and a responsibility and, we believe, the calling of a JCC poised to meet both the challenges and opportunities of today and tomorrow.

Thank you for helping us activate community to build a stronger Jewish future.

Merris Groff, Chair of the Board
Jason Kunzman, President & CEO

Health and Wellness



Renovated Squirrel Hill fitness and locker room areas elevated functional fitness options and created more opportunities for meaningful workout recovery.

At the JCC, health encompasses physical, emotional, social and spiritual well-being.

- **2,212** adults participated in a wide range of group fitness and aquatics classes designed to meet every interest and stage of life, a **13%** increase from last year.
- **1,254** older adults, up **36%** from the previous year, participated in SilverSneakers® and AgeWell fitness and wellness programs that support independence and healthy aging.
- **1,400** members participated in aquatics programming including group and individual swim lessons, Sailfish Swim Teams and the Jimmy Goldman Masters Swim Team Program.
- **30,384** personal training sessions were completed, a record for personal training revenue that reflected increased engagement in individualized health and wellness services and the value members place on achieving their personal fitness goals.
- **1,155** children and adults stayed active, learned new skills and grew their talents in dance, pickleball, basketball and other recreational programs.





Nurturing People through Personal Training

Personal Training is one of many JCC programs that embody the JCC mission to nurture people and connect community.

“Hi darling.” That’s how Carol, warming up on a bike next to her husband Ned, greets John, her husband’s personal trainer.

John works with some clients who have disabling conditions such as Alzheimer’s disease and low vision. In action, he radiates empathy and sensitivity to his clients’ unique needs. “He’s caring, kind and gentle and very responsive,” Carol says.

John is working with Ned to ensure that he maintains full range of motion, doing strength training for movement and stretching for flexibility.

“I was inspired to specialize in mobility training following an active childhood and college playing basketball,” John says. “When I was 23, I suffered excruciating back pain and realized it was because I was not doing enough stretching.”

Now, he says, “My approach is holistic, balancing strength training with stretching for each individual’s full range of motion and functionality.” In his practice, “I make sure to meet the clients where they are,” John says, “not only strengthening what they want, but what they need.”

Children and Teens



From the earliest years through young adulthood, the JCC helps children and teens build confidence, friendships, leadership skills and Jewish identity.

■ **971** children and teens participated in early childhood education, after-school programs, enrichment opportunities and educational programming.

■ Approximately **1 IN 4** children/young adults with disabilities or categorized as neurodiverse participated in inclusive, enriching programming. This includes **14** participants in our *Gesher* Inclusion Program.

■ **781** teens engaged in Jewish life through more than **50** programs on the Second Floor. **58** teens participated in Jewish Learning Fellowships that developed Jewish identity, strengthened their connection to Israel and built leadership skills. **140** teens participated in programs focused on Israel engagement.

■ **228** teens gained valuable workplace experience through summer employment across JCC camps and programs.

■ **91** parents engaged in a wide variety of JParent activities and programs designed to help participants explore Jewish life, parenting, spirituality and community.



JCC Stories

Supportive Employment in the *Gesher* Inclusion Program

Every Monday morning, Max, a *Gesher* participant, becomes a JCC employee. Accompanied by an aide, Max pushes a cart through the halls of the JCC collecting boxes full of old documents and takes them to an on-site shredder to prepare them for recycling. When he needs a break, he has another job: Pumping up basketballs in the Kaufmann Gym.

Max is among the first in *Gesher*, a program for young adults with disabilities, to be matched with what Linda McCullough, *Gesher* coordinator, describes as “pre-work” experiences.

“In the past, people with disabilities’ work was segregated from others’ work,” Linda says. The program has evolved to be a win-win: “These experiences help participants learn new skills and feel valued while doing work that is truly useful for the JCC community.”

Pedro, also a *Gesher* participant who puts in several hours a week in the JCC kitchen, has only positive feedback about his job. “It’s really good,” he says.

This pilot program is made possible thanks to a large donation by an anonymous Jewish foundation.

Children and Teens



1,816 campers experienced unforgettable summers and community at J&R Day Camp, South Hills Day Camp, Emma Kaufmann Camp and specialty camps.

The JCC camper experience was enhanced with South Hills Day Camp receiving American Camp Association accreditation and the appointment of Aaron Cantor, EKC director, to the ACA's National Standards Commission.





39 teen athletes participated in the JCC Maccabi Games in Kansas City and Toronto, including for the first time an athlete with a developmental disability who participated and medaled in the Maccabi Access Games. Our teens won medals in track and swim, and bronze for our softball and girls' ice hockey teams.

47 athletes ages 9-12 went to the Mini & Junior Maccabi Games in Philadelphia (Pittsburgh's first time attending) and won 16 medals.



JCC Stories

Wits Workout

What happens when you combine brain-boosting challenges, laughter, and an opportunity to connect with others? You get Wits Workout, one of the newest programs bringing AgeWell at the JCC members together.

After completing a class, one AgeWell member joked, “I’m at my wits’ end,” a playful response that captures the fun and camaraderie that have become part of the Wits Workout experience.

Funded through the USAging Strengthening Social Connections in Communities grant, Wits Workout is an evidence-informed program designed to promote cognitive stimulation while strengthening social engagement among older adults. During each six-week series, participants take part in themed activities that target different areas of cognitive engagement. Along the way, they learn strategies to support cognitive skills, challenge their minds with fun and engaging tasks, and just as importantly connect with others.

AgeWell at the JCC was one of only 11 agencies nationwide selected to participate in the first cohort of this grant.

Since Wits Workout launched at the JCC in May, 33 AgeWell members have participated. Feedback following the program has shown positive responses from participants about interacting more with others and feeling more socially connected.

For some, the program has even provided an opportunity to step outside their comfort zone. “I’m a fairly strong introvert and don’t usually participate in these types of activities. I look forward to each workout. It’s been fun!”

Wits Workout demonstrates that exercising your brain doesn’t have to feel like work. Sometimes it looks like solving a challenge, learning something new, sharing a laugh, and building connections along the way.

Older Adults



Central to the JCC's mission is helping older adults remain healthy, connected, independent and engaged.

- **2,806** older adults actively participated in AgeWell at the JCC programs in Squirrel Hill and South Hills, enjoying services and activities that promote dignity, wellness, and independence.
- **38,300** meals were served through AgeWell dining and nutrition programs.
- **200+** volunteers strengthened community through programs such as J Café, CheckMates, transportation, and friendly visitor initiatives.
- **1,600+** individuals received health screenings, vaccinations, case management, or supportive services.

AgeWell at the JCC in Squirrel Hill and South Hills, both accredited AAA sites with meals and programming 5 days a week, are the top two busiest senior centers in the Allegheny County Area Agency on Aging network.



Connecting, Investing, Innovating



The JCC creates the conditions for people to flourish, connect and belong.

- **\$1,042,000** was raised through the JCC's annual Big Night, which brought more than 800 guests together to support financial assistance and strengthen community programming.
- **\$3.5 MILLION+** was provided in confidential financial assistance, ensuring that financial circumstances didn't prevent participation in JCC programs and services.
- The JCC's American Jewish Museum partnered with S&B Construction and PennDOT in an exhibit using art, history, infrastructure and place to provide deeper understanding of the groundbreaking and innovative construction of the Commercial Street Bridge, a project that affected neighbors and travelers across the entire region.

Continued investments in facilities and security ensured that the JCC remained a welcoming and safe gathering place for everyone.

- **\$837,000** facility improvements at Squirrel Hill and South Hills JCC campuses enhanced opportunities for fitness, wellness, recreation and community gatherings.
- **\$3.38 MILLION** investment at the Henry Kaufmann Family Park, including the Cove, a modern, flexible camp and event space, and **\$671,000** at Emma Kaufmann Camp, enriched experiences for campers, families and community members.

Technology and organizational innovation helped the JCC serve the community more effectively than ever before.

- Registration for JCC programs moved entirely online, streamlining the process and enhancing the customer experience.
- The JCCPGH mobile app for classes, schedules, individual services and more, was updated to gamify health and wellness.
- The introduction of a new HR platform, Paylocity, and continued expansion of other technology platforms improved operational efficiency.
- The launch of our *JCC Voices* podcast has expanded our ability to share stories, ideas, and perspectives from across the JCC community with a broader audience.





Building Bridges/Fighting Hate

JCC Stories



Public education and engagement initiatives helped build resilience and combat antisemitism while promoting understanding and civic dialogue.

- Maggie Feinstein, Director of the 10.27 Healing Partnership, traveled to Australia with Jewish Federations of North America to stand in solidarity with Sydney's Jewish community following the 2025 Chanukah attack.

Drawing on lessons learned in Pittsburgh, she shared a message central to the Partnership's work: Healing happens through relationships, and connected, caring communities can strengthen both the response to mass violence and the path toward recovery.

- **190+** individuals participated in four Curious Conversations and a shared Passover, programs of the Unity in Community partnership between the YMCA and the JCC. Additional programs across JCC and YMCA summer day camps engaged campers and staff in learning about empathy, belonging, identity and inclusive leadership.
- **650** individuals engaged with the 10.27 Healing Partnership in counseling, programming and resilience activities and an additional 4,000 people were engaged through presentations by the 10.27 Healing Partnership staff or REACH speakers.

Jennifer Davis, Vitalant Senior Manager for Donor Recruitment, shared a recent encounter at a blood donation site. "The woman was donating blood on her birthday. I told her, 'You're giving someone else the chance to have another birthday.' She was so happy to hear it put that way."

The importance of donating blood is visible in the solid partnership JCC has with Vitalant. "It makes a real difference to people in our community," Davis says. By the JCC opening its doors as blood donation sites about six times a year in Squirrel Hill and South Hills, "You're encouraging your sphere of influence to donate and helping to remind people that it's something important to do."

The JCC and Vitalant have been partners for years, but after the October 27 shooting at Tree of Life synagogue, the 10/27 Memorial donation days became peak donation times. Davis notes that when there's a crisis or tragedy, people can feel helpless and wonder "what can I do?" Giving blood "is very healing for people," Davis says; "it's making something positive out of a tragedy or something terrible."

Deepening Our Connection to Israel



The JCC creates opportunities for meaningful Jewish engagement, education and connection with Israel.

- **430+** participated in the JCC's Israel Engagement speaker series—*Come Curious. Leave Wiser.*—developed to build “communal muscle” in civil discourse about a divisive topic.
- An Evening of Flavor and Story, an author talk and Israeli cuisine cooking demonstration with Adeena Sussman and Michael Solomonov, was savored by almost **300** community members.
- **18** campers from Israel attended Emma Kaufmann Camp.
- **33** Israeli *shlichim* (emissaries) worked at our day and overnight camps.

- **24** Diller Teen Fellows and staff from the Karmiel/Misgav region of Israel came to Pittsburgh as part of the spring Jewish Community *mifgash*—when Israeli communities visit their sister communities around the world. In the summer, **13** Pittsburgh Diller Teen Fellows and junior staff visited their Israeli colleagues and participated in the Diller Global Congress along with **600** Jewish teens from **31** communities worldwide.



JCC Stories



A new series, *Come Curious. Leave Wiser.*, fostered thoughtful dialogue and deeper understanding; three programs in the spring drew more than **430** unique participants.



Last year, Yisrael Klitsner was lunching with JCC President and CEO Jason Kunzman when the discussion turned to the disconnect between what it feels like to actually be in Israel versus the perception many Jews in America – diaspora Jews – have of the nation, especially since the war in Gaza following the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023.

“What really strikes me is the growing apathy and agnosticism about Israel,” Klitsner says. “That grows out of people feeling powerless, but when you have knowledge, it really gives you the tools to act, to say, ‘I’m part of this.’”

Thus was the inspiration for the JCC’s Israel Engagement speaker series, *Come Curious. Leave Wiser.*, developed by Klitsner with Kunzman and Fara Marcus, JCC Chief Development and Marketing Officer.

The goal is to challenge the audience, even when having difficult, divisive conversations, to consider others’ viewpoints. “We hope participants say, ‘Now I get it so much more; I understand why there is a devoted love of Israel regardless of what the government does.’”

With Klitsner as moderator, the series is designed as a six-session educational arc so that participants gain more comprehensive understanding of the nuances and the breadth and depth of issues.

Klitsner is looking forward to the coming sessions noting, “If we come out more educated, empathetic and with more understanding about our Jewish identity and its connection to Israel, that is what we hope to accomplish.”

Our Shared Framework

Vision

Activating community to build a stronger and more inclusive Jewish future.

Sheva Lenses

MASA Reflection, return & renewal

TZELEM ELOHIM Dignity & potential

B'RIT Belonging & commitment

HIT'ORERUT Amazement & gratitude

D'RASH Inquiry, dialogue & transmission

K'DUSHAH Intentionality & presence

TIKKUN OLAM Responsibility



Core Commitments

We share Jewish values in all we do

We build bridges between and among the Jewish & non-Jewish communities.

Community is our middle name

We create safe spaces to convene, connect and build lasting relationships.

Leader in inclusive & wellness-centered engagement

The JCC is for everybody.

We're with you for life

We provide full life-cycle engagement opportunities for members and growth and development opportunities for our team.

It's better here

We provide world-class experiences for our members via our programs & services; we are committed to high quality & continuous improvement.

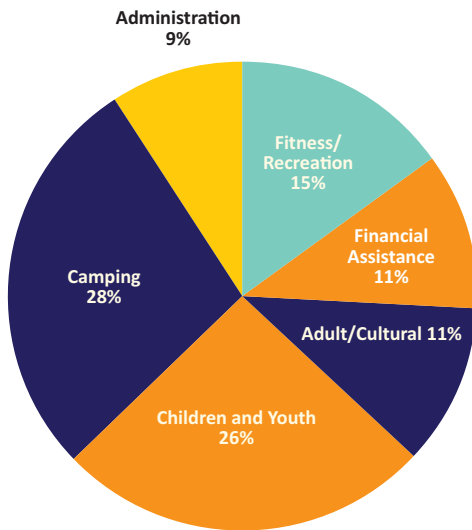
We create partnerships with a purpose

We value strong relationships with organizations who share our values.

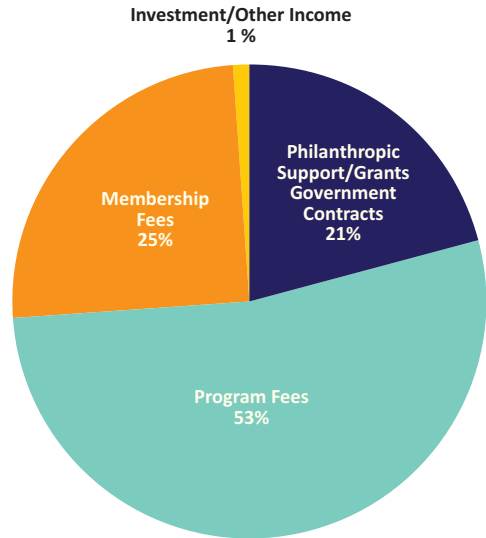
Best place to work in Pittsburgh

Our amazing staff are caring, committed & knowledgeable; our team is like family and our culture fosters collaboration, honest communication, and excellence.

Fiscal Year 2025-26 Audited



EXPENSES



REVENUE

JCCPGH: IMPACTING THOUSANDS ONE PERSON AT A TIME



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Many thanks to our community partners for their exceptional support.



NURTURING PEOPLE
CONNECTING COMMUNITY
EACH DAY
THROUGH EVERY AGE
INSPIRED BY JEWISH VALUES

JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER OF GREATER PITTSBURGH • JCCPGH.ORG

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